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INFO RUCNASE/ASEAN MEMBER COLLECTIVE
RUEHBW/AMEMBASSY BELGRADE 0013
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 5285
RUEHPS/USOFFICE PRISTINA 0025

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 000455

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/11/2018
TAGS: PREL UN UNMIK PROV YI EU TH
SUBJECT: THAILAND UNLIKELY TO RECOGNIZE KOSOVO QUICKLY

REF: STATE 13716

Classified By: Ambassador Eric G. John. reason 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary: Thailand is concerned that Kosovo independence could set a bad precedent, given Thailand's own issues with separatist insurgents in the Malay-muslim majority deep southern provinces. The MFA permanent secretary told Ambassador on February 12 that Thailand

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"almost certainly" would not recognize Kosovo at this time. End summary.

¶2. (C) Ambassador conveyed reftel points to MFA Permanent Secretary Virasakdi Futrukul on February 12. Permsec

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Virasakdi underscored Thai concerns over Kosovo's independence declaration. He drew a parallel between Kosovo's position as a Muslim-majority region seeking to break away from Serbia, and the Muslim-majority deep southern provinces of Thailand, where some insurgent groups also aspire to forming an independent state. He said that Thailand "almost certainly" would not recognize Kosovo independence at this time.

¶3. (C) Polcouns made reftel points to MFA European Affairs Director General Suthee Nalampang on February 12 as well. Polcouns emphasized that our support for Kosovo independence was consistent with UNSC resolution 1244 and with the recommendations of the UN Special Envoy. She also underscored reftel points stating specifically that Kosovo was a special case and was not a precedent for other regions. DG Suthee took note of these points and appreciated our explanation of the principles on which our decision was based, but could not make any commitment for the Thai side.

¶4. (C) Comment: If, as expected, a large number of European countries recognize Kosovo, the Thai may be willing to revisit this issue. However, they are likely to remain concerned that, despite our statements to the contrary, Kosovo could be seen as a bad precedent applicable to their southern problem. This will be a difficult barrier for the Thai to overcome.

JOHN